

Cpl. Donald W. Ashton, formerly of Beaman, has been awarded the purple heart medal for wounds received in Belgium, Dec. 24, according to word received by his wife, who lives on route 5. 1944

In a recent letter to his wife, the soldier included a resume of the action he has seen as a member of the 18th artillery battalion. It is a mimeographed sheet compiled by the army and approved for publication.



These soldiers trained in England until July 4 when they were sent to France to participate in the Normandy invasion. They have been in Europe since that time and while not always in combat, they have never been far from the front lines. They first saw action just north of La Haye du Puits. The fighting was tough in those hedgerow days and the smell of death permeated everything. There were dead German and American soldiers along the roads and dead cattle everywhere.

IN ST. LO ACTION.

Shortly before the breakthrough at St. Lo the battalion was transferred to that sector. Then they pushed on past Paris into the Netherlands and Belgium. During this push they were attached to a spearhead unit and were sometimes so far in advance of our lines that German soldiers, who had been separated from their divisions, would approach them thinking they were German troops. When not in combat these men were used to ease the problems of transportation and communication which were more and more acute as our troops advanced toward Berlin.

More recently they have participated in the action south of Aachen and taken part in the battles following the German breakthrough at St. Vith and Bastogne in December. They were stationed at the northern flank and helped hold the corner at Monschau.

Corporal Ashton was inducted April 21, 1942, and trained at Fort Sill, Okla., and Camp Gordon, Ga. He was sent to England in February, 1944. Prior to entering the service he was co-owner of a garage at Beaman. He is the son of George Ashton of Beaman.